

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 909

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, US,NU

SUBJECT: FRASER HEARINGS: FATHER CARDENAL

1. TODAY'S NOVEDADES (AUGUST 19) CARRIES STORY HEADLINED "DENIAL OF PUNISHMENT AGAINST FATHER FERNANDO CARDENAL". STORY IS BASED ON STATEMENT OF GON PRESS SECRETARY BERMUDEZ SETTING RECORD STRAIGHT ON GON ATTITUDE TOWARD FATHER FERNANDO CARDENAL FOLLOWING HIS TESTIMONY BEFORE FRASER HEARINGS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN NICARAGUA. INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF TEST FOLLOWS:

"THE NICARAGUAN SECRETARY OF INFORMATION AND PRESS, ROGER BERMUDEZ, DENIED TODAY A VERSION CIRCULATING ABROAD TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PRIEST AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR FERNANDO CARDENAL HAS BEEN PUNISHED FOR HAVING IMPUGNED THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS COUNTRY.

"CARDENAL SPOKE BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

"DECLARATIONS REFERRING TO PUNISHMENT WERE MADE BY THE NORTH AMERICAN LEGISLATOR DONALD FRASER. IN THIS REGARD THE NICARAGUAN SECRETARY OF INFORMATION AND PRESS STATES THAT 'HE IS ABLE TO DENY' THAT FATHER CARDENAL 'HAS BEEN PUNISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT.'

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"HE ADDS THAT THE DECLARATIONS OF THE PRIEST ARE 'FALSE AND ALARMING ACCUSATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN DENIED IN THEIR TOTALITY BY THIS OFFICE AND BY THE U.S. EMBASSY'.

'FATHER FERNANDO CARDENAL ENTERED THE COUNTRY AFTER HAVING BEEN IN WASHINGTON JUST AS HEL LEFT, WITHOUT ANY AUTHORITY BOTHERING HIM IN ANY WAY, AND HE IS ENJOYING ALL FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS WHICH OUR CONSTITUTION CONFERS.'

"FURTHER, 'WITH REGARD TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS PREPARING A RESOLUTION TO CONDEMN THE ANTI-PATRIOTIC POSTURE OF CARDENAL, THIS IS AN ACT WHICH IT CLEARLY MAY DO, INASMUCH AS IT IS A SOVEREIGN BODY WHICH ACTS WITH COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE EXECUTIVE POWER.'

"AND IN CONCLUSION, THE PRESS SECRETARY SAYS: 'THE STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN FRASER ALSO LACKS VERACITY WITH REGARD TO OUR GOVERNMENT HAVING SAID THAT CARDENAL AND HIS COUSIN, THE POET ERNESTO, ARE GOING TO BE EXPELLED FROM THEIR UNIVERSITY POSITIONS, BECAUSE THE TWO UNIVERSITIES WHICH EXIST IN THE COUNTRY ALSO ARE AUTONOMOUS, I.E., THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH EITHER THEIR DECISIONS, OR THEIR LEADERSHIP.'"

2. IN LIGHT OF KNOWN INTEREST OF CONGRESSMAN FRASER AND HIS STAFF RE TREATMENT OF FATHER CARDENAL, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO FURNISH ABOVE GON STATEMENT TO FRASER'S OFFICE.

3. EMB BELIEVES IT IS UNLIKELY ANY UNIVERSITY POSITION HELD BY ERNESTO CARDENAL AS IMPLIED IN THE ABOVE ARTICLE. WE WILL ATEMPT TO VERIFY ANY UNIVERSITY POSITIONS HELD BY EITHER ERNESTO OR FERNANDO CARDENAL.
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